

5-2-2019

# Step Two in Flood Recovery of Pastures Is Renovation

Beth Doran

Joel L. DeJong

Iowa State University, jldejong@iastate.edu

Brian J. Lang

Iowa State University, bjlang@iastate.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cropnews>



Part of the [Agricultural Science Commons](#), and the [Agriculture Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Doran, Beth; DeJong, Joel L.; and Lang, Brian J., "Step Two in Flood Recovery of Pastures Is Renovation" (2019). *Integrated Crop Management News*. 2540.

<https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cropnews/2540>

**The Iowa State University Digital Repository provides access to Integrated Crop Management News for historical purposes only. Users are hereby notified that the content may be inaccurate, out of date, incomplete and/or may not meet the needs and requirements of the user. Users should make their own assessment of the information and whether it is suitable for their intended purpose. For current information on integrated crop management from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, please visit <https://crops.extension.iastate.edu/>.**

---

## Step Two in Flood Recovery of Pastures Is Renovation

### **Abstract**

As flood waters recede, the renovation of flooded pastures is just beginning. Now is a good time to check pasture plants for survival. Forage production is a function of the plant species, and their density and growth. Evaluate live plants (plant vigor), plant density, and desirable species versus weeds.

### **Disciplines**

Agricultural Science | Agriculture

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

## Extension and Outreach

Integrated Crop Management

## Step Two in Flood Recovery of Pastures Is Renovation

May 2, 2019

---

As flood waters recede, the renovation of flooded pastures is just beginning. Now is a good time to check pasture plants for survival. Forage production is a function of the plant species, and their density and growth. Evaluate live plants (plant vigor), plant density, and desirable species versus weeds.

Flooding can flush certain nutrients necessary for plant growth out of the soil. If there is adequate ground cover of desirable species, try boosting production with the application of 50 to 80 pounds of nitrogen per acre. Grasses usually respond the most to nitrogen fertilization, but soil sampling will reveal if other nutrients were removed from the soil and need to be replaced.

Another impact of flooding on grass pastures may be excessive sediment deposits. Most perennial forages can produce new shoots and tillers if sediment deposits are less than two inches. In this case, crusting may occur, and light tillage will level sediment and enhance recovery. With deeper sediment, plants can suffocate and result in substantial stand loss. In these areas, mechanical removal of the sediment is preferred to reduce plant loss and reduce the need for reseeding.



With thinner stands, interseeding with a no-till drill may be the best approach. If the stand is too thin, then complete renovation or reseeding may be needed. If interseeding, consider what species to include in the seed mixture to improve pasture performance. For example, species tolerant of wetter or drier conditions, close grazing or rotational grazing, or more tolerant of summer slump might be appropriate choices.

ISU Extension and Outreach publication [Selecting Forage Species](#) could help with this decision. Also, the publication [Steps to Establish and Maintain Legume-Grass Pastures](#) might be of interest to those considering establishing and maintaining legume-grass pastures. Both publications can be downloaded at no charge from the online store or made available by the ISU Extension and Outreach county office.

The best way to start a new pasture is to treat it like a hay stand in the establishment year, if the terrain allows for a hay harvest. Two hay cuttings provide time to establish strong root systems, and then include the area into your normal grazing system.

With rougher terrain, interseed improved species and occasionally use a mower or a light flash grazing to reduce competition from weeds and established forage plants. Do your best to give the new seedlings a chance to establish a deep root system before incorporating the pasture into your normal grazing system.

Weeds also can be a problem in flooded pastures. Broadleaf herbicides can be applied to grass pastures; however, some herbicides have restrictions regarding new seedlings. In

those cases, periodic mowing may be the best weed control option in interseeded stands until the new seedlings are established.

Consider use of a sacrifice pasture while new stands are being established, the use of summer annuals, and/or fall grazing of cover crops. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach [beef specialists](#) and [field agronomists](#) are ready to help with questions and concerns on renovating pastures and establishing grazing systems.

**Category:** [Crop Production](#)

*Links to this article are strongly encouraged, and this article may be republished without further permission if published as written and if credit is given to the author, Integrated Crop Management News, and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. If this article is to be used in any other manner, permission from the author is required. This article was originally published on May 2, 2019. The information contained within may not be the most current and accurate depending on when it is accessed.*

**Crop:**

[Biomass and Forage](#)

**Tags:** [flooding](#) [hay pastures](#) [grazing](#) [flood recovery](#) [interseeding](#) [pasture management](#)

**Authors:**

[Beth Doran](#)



[Joel DeJong](#) *Field Agronomist in NW Iowa*

Joel DeJong has over 20 years of experience working closely with farmers on integrated management of pest populations, crop management issues, and nutrient and manure management planning. As the extension field agronomist in northwest Iowa, he currently educates crop producers on proper nutrient ...



[Brian Lang](#) *Field Agronomist in NE Iowa*

Brian Lang conducts Iowa State University Extension and Outreach programs in crop production and protection in northeast Iowa. Frequent clients include farmers, ag chemical and fertilizer dealers, seed dealers, crop consultants, and farm managers. Provide timely in-season crop management inform...

